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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 26 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 26 September 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the renewed hostilities against the territory of the Republic of Iraq in which Turkish armed forces have been engaged since 22 September 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

97-25568 (E) 290997 290997 300997

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Annex

Identical letters dated 26 September 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On 22 September 1997 Turkish armed forces carried out a fresh incursion into northern Iraq when some 15,000 troops supported by more than 100 tanks and other military vehicles entered through the Khabur point (Ibrahim al-Khalil) and proceeded towards Zakho and areas of Iraq bordering Syria to the south of mount Hayırsız. They thus reinforced the Turkish armed forces that have been inside Iraqi territory since the last Turkish incursion on 13 May 1997.

The Turkish assaults on Iraq's territorial integrity and on its airspace constitute a threat to the country's safety and security over and above the threats arising from the anomalous situation created by the United States of America and its coalition partners with their maintenance of the no-fly zones and their use of Turkish territory and Turkish military bases to launch intimidation against Iraq with the approval of the Turkish Government.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq condemns in the strongest terms this fresh act of aggression by Turkey, which is a flagrant violation of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and it calls upon the Turkish Government to withdraw its invading forces from Iraqi territory forthwith and to desist from again engaging in practices that are incompatible with relations of good-neighbourliness and the principles of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations.

As I said in my letter of 21 August 1997 (S/1997/664, annex), the Turkish Government bears full international responsibility for continuing these acts of aggression inside Iraqi territory and for all their consequences, regardless of the alleged reasons it gives. The Government of Iraq reserves its legitimate right under international law to determine an appropriate response to this brutal military aggression and to seek compensation for the damage caused by these Turkish violations of Iraq's territory and airspace and for the human suffering inflicted on Iraqi citizens by these repeated acts of aggression.

As I reiterate my country's call to Turkey to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, I urge you to meet your responsibilities as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and to condemn these renewed hostilities against a founding Member of the United Nations and to call upon the Turkish Government to withdraw its forces immediately from Iraqi territory and desist from these hostile practices.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq